

W A S H I N G T O N
H I G H E R
EDUCATION
C O O R D I N A T I N G B O A R D

July 2006

Draft Minutes of May 25 meeting

HECB Members Present

Mr. Gene Colin, chair
Mr. Jesus Hernandez, secretary
Mr. Charley Bingham
Ms. Roberta Greene
Mr. Bill Grinstein, vice chair
Mr. Lance Kissler
Sen. Betti Sheldon
Dr. Sam Smith
Mr. Mike Worthy

Welcome

Chair Gene Colin introduced Charles “Charley” Bingham, newly appointed board member. Mr. Bingham is a retired executive vice president for the Weyerhaeuser Company, and currently sits on the Washington Learns steering committee. He was a visiting fellow at the Yale University Graduate School for Forestry and Environmental Studies and earned his law degree from Harvard University. Mr. Bingham will serve a four-year term ending June 30, 2010.

President George Bridges of Whitman College welcomed the board to the Walla Walla campus. He spoke of three major challenges facing higher education in Washington state, and Whitman’s commitment to providing its students with the necessary tools to cope with these challenges:

- Changing demographics. Fifty percent of all children under the age of five in Washington and the nation as a whole belong to an ethnic minority; in about 10 years, these children will be ready to enter college. That demographic change will result in a change in the makeup and priorities of the student body;
- Responding to the needs of a continuously changing world and the need to learn about increasingly complex issues; and
- Steadily rising tuition costs and the effect of this increase on higher education access for future generations of students.

UW doctoral program in Nursing Practice added to the agenda

The board discussed a recommendation from the Education Committee to revise the day's agenda to include another action item, a proposal from the University of Washington for a new Doctor in Nursing Practice (DNP).

Dr. Sam Smith, chair of the Education Committee, said the committee met by conference call on May 24 to discuss the degree proposal. The proposal has been circulated among Washington higher education stakeholders for review, and has been posted on the HECB Web site for the standard 30-day comment period. The program was originally scheduled for review during the board's July meeting; however, the UW has received word that a grant application to the U.S. Health Resource Service Administration requires that the program be approved prior to July. In light of this development, the institution had requested that the HECB program review process be expedited. The Education Committee voted to move the proposal forward to the full board for consideration.

Action: **Sam Smith** moved to revise the board agenda to include UW's doctoral proposal in Nursing Practice; **Roberta Greene** seconded the motion, which received unanimous approval.

March meeting minutes approved

Action: **Bill Grinstein** moved to approve the minutes of the board's March meeting; **Roberta Greene** seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

B.S. in Agricultural and Food Systems at Washington State University approved

Action: **Sam Smith** moved to approve the B.S. in Agricultural and Food Systems at Washington State University (Res. 06-13). **Mike Worthy** seconded the motion. The program was unanimously approved.

Report of the executive director

- **Snohomish, Island, Skagit counties (SIS) project**

Executive director Jim Sulton said the project is on track for a December 1 report to the legislature. Staff have held a series of town hall meetings in each of the three counties to give

local residents an opportunity to weigh in on the top four alternatives recommended by the 13-member advisory committee.

The four alternatives are:

- A four-year comprehensive public college or university;
- A four-year comprehensive public college or university with a poly-technical focus;
- A four-year college or university affiliated with an existing four-year institution; and
- A four-year college or university with poly-technical focus affiliated with an existing four-year institution.

Project consultants NBBJ and MGT of America, Inc. will begin drafting the final report next month, which will come before the board for approval during its October meeting in Yakima. Once the final report is completed, any action such as site selection and construction would require approval and additional funding by the legislature and governor.

- **Fall 2006 application trends**

Sulton briefed the board on a prospective decline in student enrollments, based on a decrease in the number of applications for admission that Washington colleges and universities are receiving. This matter is of concern because of its policy implications: a decline in enrollments could affect budgets, academic planning and capital construction, among other issues.

The Office of Financial Management, the Council of Presidents, and HECB staff are conducting an “Applications Match Study” to analyze existing enrollment and application data from all public 4-year institutions. The board will be further advised once the study is complete.

- **Academic Competitiveness Grants**

Earlier this year, Congress created two new federal grant programs – Academic Competitiveness Grants and the Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent (SMART) grants – aimed at increasing the number of low-income students attending college, especially in scientific disciplines. Up to 500,000 students could be eligible next year for the two programs. The U.S. Department of Education has set temporary guidelines that define qualification standards.

Sulton said that while the basic premise of the grants is laudable, certain aspects of the programs raise concern:

- The grants are available only to full-time students who just graduated from high school, thereby excluding many older and part-time students.
- Students must maintain a 3.0 G.P.A. in college to earn the grants in the second through fourth years; this policy institutes a merit-based component into financial aid programs that have historically been only need-based.

The HECB wrote to Secretary Spellings to request that students enrolled in Running Start (a dual-credit high school and higher education program) qualify for the Academic Competitiveness Grant. The HECB believes that the highly successful Running Start program should be included as an acceptable measure of a “rigorous” curriculum. The letter to Secretary Spellings explained that Running Start students meet the intent of the underlying law, which is to encourage and reward the pursuit of a rigorous secondary program of study.

- **Transfer and articulation framework**

During the Education Committee meeting, HECB associate director Andi Smith discussed ongoing efforts to strengthen the existing framework for articulation and transfer. Smith said that adoption of a formal framework would help solidify transfer as a key strategy in increasing baccalaureate degree production. HECB staff are currently reviewing the board’s policy statements and working with the institutions to document the best practices already in place, and identify gaps in current public policy. The formal framework will address a number of issues, including student advising and existing statewide articulation agreements, and will be presented to the board for review and approval in late summer.

- **Evergreen President Les Purce to co-chair HECB Advisory Council**

At the suggestion of the Executive Committee, Dr. Purce has been asked to co-chair the board’s Advisory Council. Dr. Purce has agreed, and will assume his new position at the council’s June 22 meeting.

Board approves UW Doctor in Nursing Practice (DNP) degree program

Randy Spaulding, HECB senior associate director, provided background information on the UW’s proposal to establish a doctoral degree in nursing practice. He said that over time, the program would replace UW’s practice-oriented nursing master’s degrees, which currently train nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, certified nurse midwives, and community health nurses. The DNP program would begin in fall 2007 with 30 FTE, growing to 270 FTE by its seventh year. DNP graduates would serve as faculty as well as nurse practitioners. The proposed program would be one-of-a-kind in the Northwest, and one of only a dozen nationally.

Representatives from the University of Washington were present to respond to board questions regarding the relevance, necessity, purpose, and benefit of the proposed doctoral program:

- Susan Woods, UW associate dean of the School of Nursing;
- Fred Campbell, dean emeritus of undergraduate education; and
- Marie-Annette Brown, Ph.D., ARNP, RN, FAAN, and professor of Family and Child Nursing.

The DNP is being proposed primarily in response to the increasing complexity of the health care industry, increased requirements that have been added to the master’s program, and the growing need to replace current faculty who are nearing retirement age.

Worthy asked Spaulding if HECB staff have had sufficient time to evaluate the program proposal. Spaulding replied that UW School of Nursing staff have satisfactorily addressed questions and concerns that were raised during the Education Committee meeting, and that the proposal is very strong.

Colin asked UW program staff to report back in one year on the status of the program.

Action: **Mike Worthy** moved to approve the Doctor in Nursing Practice at the University of Washington (Res. 06-14). **Roberta Greene** seconded the motion. The program was unanimously approved.

Guaranteed Education Tuition (GET) program

Betty Lochner, GET director, briefed the board on Washington's Section 529 prepaid college tuition program, which provides families with a tax-advantaged, safe and affordable way to pay for college tuition in the future by purchasing GET "units" at today's rates.

For the second consecutive year, GET is the fastest-growing prepaid tuition plan in the nation. More than 11,000 new accounts were opened this year, bringing the total to over 66,000. Most GET participants are from middle-income families who don't earn enough to pay as they go and often do not qualify for financial aid programs. About 5,000 students are currently using their GET units; 8,000 more will be eligible in the fall. More than 75 percent of students use their GET units at a Washington public institution. New enrollment will begin September 15 and run through March 30, 2007. The unit price was adjusted on May 1, and has increased from \$66 to \$70 per unit.

GET needs predictability in order to remain actuarially sound. In a worst-case scenario – wherein double-digit increases in tuition were to occur over several years, and GET funds were projected to be insufficient to cover contractual obligations – state law requires the legislature to appropriate enough funds for the program to cover its expenses for the biennium. GET reserves are administered by the State Investment Board.

Report of the Financial Aid Committee

- **Review of private career school eligibility to participate in the State Need Grant (SNG) program**

John Klacik, HECB director for student financial assistance, and Rick Sinclair, director of finance at the Interface Computer School (representing the Washington Federation of Private Career Schools and Colleges - WFPSC) summarized the efforts of a joint workgroup to review the criteria by which for-profit career schools are allowed to participate in the SNG program.

The workgroup will also seek to ensure that participating institutions abide by rigorous standards of operation and that SNG recipients are capable and qualified.

Fifteen private for-profit schools currently participate in the SNG program. Most are located in the central Puget Sound area. In 2004-05, participating schools enrolled about 8,000 students; 2,700 received SNG funding amounting to \$4.2 million. Since 1985, about 22 private for-profit institutions have participated in the SNG program, eight of which have gone out of business. In two of these cases, the schools closed their doors while still owing money to the state. The WFPSC maintains that such closures reflect negatively on the industry as a whole, and is working with the HECB to prevent unexpected closures by for-profit schools. One recent closure was precipitous: one day the school was conducting business-as-usual, and the next day students found a chain on the door when they arrived for class. There is no existing safeguard against this type of closure, but the current review of eligibility criteria would help identify at-risk schools early on.

Changes to SNG participation requirements could lead to increased enrollment. There are currently at least 19 schools with a total of 4,000 to 5,000 students who do not participate in the SNG program, but could be eligible once the changes are implemented.

- **Update on the scholarship clearinghouse**

The Scholarship Coalition is an informal, non-governmental group of organizations that has partnered with the HECB to develop a scholarship clearinghouse. The clearinghouse would bring together Washington donors and students and also would encourage more organizations to create or contribute to scholarships. The coalition has secured a \$45,000 grant from the Education Assistance Foundation (recently renamed College Spark) to hire a consultant to conduct a feasibility and implementation study, which will be completed in October. Next steps involve securing funding for software development. The plan is for the HECB to eventually take over maintenance of the clearinghouse. This project complements HECB efforts to produce a Web-based advising system that would eventually enable community college students to explore transfer options to the state's 4-year institutions.

New Eastern Washington University president welcomed

Colin welcomed Dr. Rodolfo Arévalo, the new president of Eastern Washington University, and invited him to say a few words.

Report of the Education Committee

- **Applied baccalaureate pilot programs at the two-year colleges**

HB 1794, passed by the 2005 legislature, authorized pilot programs leading to applied baccalaureate degrees in four of the state's public two-year colleges. The proposed degree programs are subject to the same comprehensive review process used by the HECB to assess all

new degree programs. The process takes into account faculty roles and institutional support, links between program proposals and institutional assessment, and accreditation and planning.

During its April 24 meeting, the Education Committee received a preliminary analysis of the four applied baccalaureate pilot proposals. Loretta Seppanen of the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) provided a summary of the SBCTC review and selection process. The institutions were given the opportunity to present brief overviews of their proposals and respond to questions from the committee.

Subsequently, the institutions submitted full proposals (available on the HECB Web site) for public comment. Following the public comment period – scheduled to end in June – the proposals will return to the Education Committee for review, and will then be presented to the full board for consideration during its July 27 meeting. If approved, the programs would enter a development phase in fall 2006, including a review by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, curriculum development, and faculty hiring. The programs would begin enrolling students in fall 2007, with 20 FTE each in the first year, and 40 FTE in the second year.

Smith said the Education Committee will work with the accrediting organizations to ensure that board members are kept apprised of the timing and status of the process.

- **Statewide higher education accountability framework and targets approved**

State law directs the HECB to “establish an accountability monitoring and reporting system” for higher education in Washington. Chris Thompson, HECB director for government and university relations, presented an aligned accountability framework that was achieved through a collaborative effort between the governor’s office, OFM, the HECB, COP and the institutions. Targets to improve efficiency were also discussed.

Debora Merle, higher education policy advisor to the governor, said that higher education accountability efforts are constantly evolving. Ideally, the new framework will be kept in place long enough to reach the proposed targets and gather data on the results of the institutions’ efforts. Decreasing the number of indicators that institutions have to report on will also make it easier to track accountability elements.

The process is not over. Near-term efforts will include gathering additional data on job placement and employer satisfaction with recently hired graduates of Washington’s public baccalaureate institutions, exploring the feasibility of various methods of collecting data, and refining some of the indicator definitions. In the long term, the group hopes to connect meaningful results with constructive consequences. For example, while efficiency is not entirely tied to funding, it is important to ensure adequate funding to help the institutions meet the targets. Another long-term goal is to bring student learning into the picture.

Jesùs Hernandez raised the concern that equal opportunity and diversity are not addressed in the framework, sending the message that these issues are not valued by the state. He asserted that addressing diversity at the front end as a performance indicator would encourage institutions to

be more proactive in terms of outreach and recruitment of ethnic minorities. Thompson said that the data collected on Pell Grant recipients, who tend to belong to underserved groups, help fill this gap; however no data is being collected on student performance by ethnicity. This is a concern that has been raised in the past, and is something the workgroup plans to address.

Worthy asked why targets for the two-year institutions extend to only 2007, while four-year institutions have indicated targets to 2010-11. In addition, Worthy said the goals for the two-year institutions fall short of those set in the strategic master plan. Thompson replied that there are plans to set targets by November for 2008-09 and 2010-11 at the two-year institutions. Because enrollment at the two-year colleges has been dropping significantly for the past two years, the colleges are waiting to see fall 2006 enrollment numbers before setting targets for the next six years. Enrollment rates at community and technical colleges are closely tied to the state of the economy.

Worthy asked if community colleges should be more bullish in their degree production, in the way that four-year institutions are. Thompson replied that community and technical college targets are driven by biennial appropriations.

Grinstein asked if there had been any discussion about cost and productivity during the workgroup sessions, because he believes that evidence of a more efficient system would motivate the business community to contribute to higher education. Thompson said that the percentage of students who graduate within 125 percent of the required number of credits in their degree programs could be considered a productivity indicator. He said there have been conversations about state appropriations and state authorization levels, but the cost-per-unit produced was not discussed; however, all of the indicators listed deal with productivity in one way or another.

Action: **Sam Smith** moved to approve the Statewide Higher Education Accountability Framework and Targets (Res. 06-10). **Roberta Greene** seconded the motion. The motion was approved with one **abstention from Mike Worthy**, due to incomplete targets from the two-year college system. **Jesùs Hernandez** voted to approve the report, with the understanding that diversity will be considered as the work progresses.

- **Awards in high-demand grant programs approved**

Joann Wismann, HECB deputy director, described the background and process used to determine awards for HECB-administered high-demand programs. The budget signed into law by Governor Gregoire on March 31 included high-demand funds to be awarded by the HECB to the state's four regional universities. The legislature allocated \$900,000, for a total of 80 FTE.

The budget defined high-demand fields as those in which "enrollment access is limited and employers are experiencing difficulty finding qualified graduates to fill job openings."

In calling for proposals, the HECB asked the institutions to address the findings included in the HECB Statewide and Regional Needs Assessment, and to address such issues as diversity and the significantly lower-than-average college participation in certain areas of the state. In addition, grant applicants were encouraged to submit letters of support from the local business communities as evidence that their programs would help employers.

The review committee, which included representatives from institutions and state agencies recommended funding for the following programs:

- Organic Chemistry at Central Washington University; will allow program graduates to work in any number of high-demand fields;
- General Studies in Social Science at Central Washington University; will take place in Yakima, thereby serving place-bound students and providing the community with much needed graduates in the field of social science;
- Communication Disorders at Eastern Washington University, also known as speech language pathology;
- Occupational Therapy at Eastern Washington University;
- Physical Therapy at Eastern Washington University;
- Plastics Engineering Technology & Vehicle Design at Western Washington University; and
- Secondary Education in Math & Science at Western Washington University.

The Evergreen State College did not submit a proposal for this round of awards; private institutions did not submit proposals in partnership with public institutions.

Action: **Roberta Greene** moved to approve the proposed awards in high-demand programs (Res. 06-11). **Lance Kissler** seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

- **Washington State Transition Mathematics Project and college readiness mathematics standards**

Ricardo Sanchez, HECB associate director for academic affairs, updated the board on college readiness efforts underway in Washington state. He said there are two dynamics playing out at the state level: (1) many students need remedial math and English upon entering college, and (2) an increasing number of jobs require at least some postsecondary education. Many states, including Washington, are taking up the challenge of defining college readiness to help students transition from high school to postsecondary education.

In Washington, the 2004 Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education calls for defining college readiness in the key subject areas of mathematics, science, English, social studies, world languages, and the arts.

With funding provided by the legislature and governor in 2005, the HECB is leading the effort to define college readiness in English and science. The definitions are expected to be submitted to the board in December 2006. The board's college readiness project is a cross-sector collaborative approach, involving representatives from K-12, community colleges, and baccalaureate institutions.

Sanchez introduced Bill Moore, policy associate of assessment, teaching and learning at the SBCTC and project director for the Transition Mathematics Project (TMP), an effort funded by the state and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The HECB is part of a cross-sector management team that oversees the TMP.

Moore provided background on the standards developed in mathematics that are geared to helping students understand what is necessary to complete entry-level college coursework in mathematics. The standards have been teacher/faculty-driven and have and have drawn positive reviews across the state from educators, business leaders and mathematics organizations.

Moore said that math is a huge issue -- not only in Washington, but in the entire nation. Of all recent high school graduates who are pursuing a college education, almost half require some form of pre-college math. Moore said this number is a source of concern, and the primary reason why the TMP received funding from the 2005 legislature.

The purpose of the TMP is to define college-readiness standards in order to help students transition smoothly from high school to college; particularly in the areas of math and quantitative reasoning. Long-term goals of the project include modifying student behavior and reducing math remediation in college. Other TMP goals are to encourage students to take more math courses and more rigorous math courses, and to improve the quality of math instruction.

The TMP is focused on implementing, not just defining, math standards. During Phase I, the TMP developed college-readiness math standards, created materials to communicate "math messages" with key audiences, and supported five local and regional partnerships focused on college readiness in math.

In Phase II of the project, the team will work with several regional partnerships across Washington, and is in the process of developing such products as:

- Professional development materials and programs for math teachers;
- Alternative, rigorous math courses for high school juniors and seniors;
- High school and college curriculum alignment analyses; and
- Student and parent outreach and early placement and advising models.

Charley Bingham asked how it will be determined in five years which improvements have been made, and what the follow-up process looks like. Moore replied that an evaluation process is built into Phase II, as well as collaboration with local partnerships. Another measuring stick is to

see whether high school students are taking more math courses, and whether they are taking math courses later in their high school careers.

Grinstein asked what is being done to encourage students and parents to take an interest in the project. Moore replied that toolkits, partnerships, and information in Spanish are being used. Phase II involves talking to Parent Teacher Associations and making more formal connections in outreach efforts.

Action: **Sam Smith** moved to accept the standards outlined in the TMP report and to support continued collaboration through Phase II of the project (Res. 06-12); **Bill Grinstein** seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

- **Biennial Review of Academic Enrollments, Programs, and Locations**

This item was tabled for presentation and discussion at the board's July 27 meeting.

Public Comment

Wendy Radar-Konofalski of the Washington chapter of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and Gary King of the Washington Education Association (WEA), representing faculty from community and technical colleges and pre-K through K-12 teachers and classified employees, addressed the board during the public comment portion of the agenda.

The AFT, in concert with WEA, now represents all faculty at Eastern Washington University, Central Washington University, and Western Washington University, under the umbrella of the United Faculty of Washington State (UFWS). Radar-Konofalski and King said the UFWS would like to be included in important decision-making processes at the college level as well as at the state level. As such, they would like to work closely with the HECB on such matters as accountability, the strategic master plan, and other higher education policy issues.

With regard to time-to-degree, they said that faculty are also concerned with the issue, but would like to point out that some factors – such as economic and educational background and ethnicity – need to be taken into account when designing any kind of accountability framework.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.